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ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND REGULATIONS

BUFFER INITIATIVE

K.A.R. 11-9-1. Definitions. (a) "Buffer" is a strip or area of land maintained in permanent vegetation to help reduce potential pollution problems and achieve other conservation objectives. Buffers are appropriately installed along streams to enhance water quality.

(b) "Commission" means the state conservation commission (SCC).

(c) "Commissioners" means the commissioners of the state conservation commission.

(d) "Continuous sign-up" means that persons eligible for CRP may request to enroll certain acreage in the program at any time. The CRP practices available during continuous sign-up provide environmental benefits complementary to the initiative.

(e) "CRP" means the conservation reserve program administered by the USDA farm service agency (FSA) with technical responsibility assigned to the USDA natural resources conservation service (NRCS). The CRP may provide cost share assistance to establish vegetation on eligible land and provides annual rental payments on a per acre basis to maintain enrolled acres for a period up to 15 years.

(f) "Director" means the executive director of the state conservation commission.

(g) "District" means a conservation district.

(h) "Filter strip" means a strip or area of grass for removing sediment, organic matter, and other pollutants from runoff and wastewater.

(i) "FSA" means the farm service agency.

(j) "Initiative" means the Kansas water quality buffer initiative.

(k) "NRCS" means the natural resources conservation service.

(l) "Practices" means cultural or structural measures that are installed or constructed on land for the purpose of improving or maintaining water quality.

(m) "Program" means the Kansas water quality buffer initiative, which shall be implemented in a manner to enhance participation under the continuous sign-up provision of the conservation reserve program by providing state incentives to supplement federal payments for riparian forest buffers and filter strips.

(n) "Riparian forest buffer" means a strip or area of vegetation containing trees and grass for removing sediment, organic matter, and other pollutants from runoff and wastewater.

(o) "Unfarmable field" means the remaining portion of a field in which 51% or more of the total acreage has been enrolled in the continuous sign-up.

(p) "USDA" means the United States department of agriculture. (Authorized by and implementing K.S.A. 2-1915, as amended by L. 1998, Ch. 143, Sec. 46; effective Feb. 5, 1999.)

K.A.R. 11-9-2. Eligible areas. All land within a TMDL high priority area or a designated priority area within the state of Kansas as determined by the commission shall be eligible for the initiative. (Authorized by and implementing K.S.A. 2000 Supp. 2-1915, as amended by L. 2001, Ch. 64, Sec. 1; effective Feb. 5, 1999; amended Aug. 23, 2002.)

K.A.R. 11-9-3. Eligible applicants. Any individual, owner, or operator, excluding state units of government, who is eligible for CRP and owns land within the eligible area shall be eligible for the initiative. Applicants who are ineligible for CRP may be eligible under the initiative if all selection criteria are met. (Authorized by and implementing K.S.A. 2-1915, as amended by L. 1998, Ch. 143, Sec. 46; effective Feb. 5, 1999.)

K.A.R. 11-9-4. Eligible practices. Practices that shall be eligible for incentive payments are filter strips and riparian forest buffers. Payments made through the buffer initiative shall be in addition to any CRP payments received by each applicant. (Authorized by and implementing K.S.A. 2-1915, as amended by L. 1998, Ch. 143, Sec. 46; effective Feb. 5, 1999.)

K.A.R. 11-9-5. Annual payments. (a) Payments shall be made on an annual basis coinciding with federal payments for the purpose of providing an incentive to enroll in the CRP for 10 to 15 years.

(b) Incentive payments shall not exceed the following:

(1) 30% of the total federal payment, excluding the maintenance fee for the establishment of filter strips; or

(2) 50% of the total federal payment, excluding the maintenance fee for the establishment of riparian forest buffers.

(c) All acres determined to be in an unfarmable field shall be eligible for the state incentive if the applicant agrees to establish and maintain permanent vegetative cover for the duration of the continuous CRP contract.

(d) The total state and federal payment shall not exceed \$150.00 per acre unless an exception is granted by the commission. (Authorized by and implementing K.S.A. 2000 Supp. 2-1915, as amended by L. 2001, Ch. 64, Sec. 1; effective Feb. 5, 1999; amended Aug. 23, 2002.)

K.A.R. 11-9-6. Contracts. Each contract shall be for no fewer than 10 years and no more than 15 years. Funding for contracts shall be subject to annual appropriations from the state legislature and may be canceled if the funding is not renewed after the first year. (Authorized by and implementing K.S.A. 2-1915, as amended by L. 1998, Ch. 143, Sec. 46; effective Feb. 5, 1999.)

K.A.R. 11-9-7. Selection. Eligible applicants shall be approved for funding by the SCC and according to criteria developed by the director. These criteria may include the following:

(a) The amount of existing vegetation;

(b) the size of the area offered;

(c) the type of vegetation offered;

(d) the type of practice or practices offered; and

(e) the proximity either to an intermittent or perennial stream or to other areas conducive to overland flow and length of contract. (Authorized by and implementing K.S.A. 2-1915, as amended by L. 1998, Ch. 143, Sec. 46; effective Feb. 5, 1999.)

K.A.R. 11-9-8. Haying and grazing. If authorized by the CRP, haying, grazing, or both may occur without penalty under the state contract. A non-CRP participant shall be allowed to hay or graze a filter strip without penalty after development of a grazing management plan developed in cooperation with the USDA-NRCS. No grazing shall be allowed on a riparian forest buffer. (Authorized by and implementing K.S.A. 2-1915, as amended by L. 1998, Ch. 143, Sec. 46; effective Feb. 5, 1999.)

K.A.R. 11-9-9. Termination. If the federal CRP is terminated by the FSA for any contract violation or for any other reason, the state contract may also be canceled. A refund of incentive payments earned may be required at the commission's discretion. A refund of incentive payments may be required by the commission if there is a failure to follow and maintain the program objective. (Authorized by and implementing K.S.A. 2-1915, as amended by L. 1998, Ch. 143, Sec. 46; effective Feb. 5, 1999.)

K.A.R. 11-9-10. Petition for reconsideration. (a) A landowner who has been denied cost-share funding may request a reconsideration of a district decision by filing a petition for reconsideration.

(b) The petition for reconsideration shall be submitted in writing to the commission within 30 days of the decision and shall state why the decision of the district should be reviewed and why the decision should be modified or reversed.

(c) The petition shall be reviewed by the commission during the next scheduled commission meeting. Whether the decision should be affirmed, modified, or reversed shall be determined by the commission. The final decision shall state the reason or reasons for this determination. (Authorized by and implementing K.S.A. 2-1915; effective Feb. 5, 1999; amended Aug. 23, 2002.)